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Over 250 students present original research at nineteenth annual spring symposium

By JONNY EATON
Staff Writer

LAN WANG / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

Students presented both in classrooms and on posters which were on display in BiHall's Great Hall.

On Friday, April 17, Middlebury College hosted its 19th Annual Spring Symposium, highlighting student research over the past academic year. McCardell Bicentennial Hall (BiHall) became the host to all majors and disciplines, as students led 12-minute oral presentations, poster presentations in the great hall, and even a welcome dance performance.

This symposium served as a living "Ode to the Liberal Arts." What began nearly two decades ago with just 16 students has become a key part of the college academic calendar. This year, over 250 students, including 158 seniors and 15 First Years, presented original research ranging from connecting hormonal menopause blockers to female Alzheimer's risk to the original work of John Dewey.

"I feel like on the surface, everyone is so busy with their academics," Annabella Giorg Hyun '27 said. "But then when you get down to it, everyone has their own personal interests, and it's beautiful to see it all come together."

As community members, parents, faculty, and staff came together to celebrate student research, the morning opened with an interpretive dance performance by members of the Dance Company of Middlebury, who wore white and orange outfits.

Global Research, Local Impact

Rob Ambat '26, student intern at the Rohatyn Center for Global Affairs, presented his thesis on a pressing geopolitical crisis: the local economic impact on South China Sea territorial disputes.

"I was able to educate the broader Middlebury community about issues that are personally important but do not necessarily

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The Jack Langerman Community Foundation: Honoring a legacy

By ANNA DOUCET
Staff Writer

For the Middlebury community and all those who loved him, the name Jack Langerman is one held close to their hearts. Jack Langerman '19.5 was a member of the Middlebury Baseball team and a beloved member of the community. Although Langerman passed away in 2021, his legacy at Middlebury and beyond has lived on.

Following the loss of Langerman, his friends and family sought to honor him and the communities that he was part of, and in 2021, the Jack Langerman Community Foundation was established.

"We figured, okay, how do we

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A HOME AWAY FROM HOME: FRIENDS OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS MARKS 25 YEARS

By AVA RAISER
Contributing Writer

Last week, the International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) office hosted a reception marking 25 years of the Friends of International Students (FIS) Host Program — a quarter-century of fostering cross-cultural connections at Middlebury. The event brought together voices from across the program's history, from its early organizers to longtime host families and current students.

Kathy Foley, former executive director of FIS, traced the program's origins to 2001, when she arrived at the college as an international student advisor. She recalled that the idea for the program came directly from students.

"Community building is important for a sense of belonging," Foley said, noting that creating those connections was a central goal from the start.

The launch of the FIS program coincided with Middlebury's first formal international student orientation. Early student-host matching was done by hand and tracked on paper throughout orientation week. As the program evolved, the matching process moved to fall family weekend — allowing more time for preparation and ensuring international students were not excluded from a weekend centered on family connection.

The program has since grown to include a wide range of hosts, from alumni and faculty to local community members. Some participate once, while others return year after year.

Lyn DeGraff, who has hosted students since the program's early days, reflected on more than two decades of shared meals and lasting relationships. She recalled teaching students to ski, celebrating holidays together and offering support during difficult moments. Over time, those relationships have extended well beyond graduation and have met. She has met the spouses and children of her students, invited them to her daughter's wedding, and hosted someone who came back to teach during J-term.

"Whenever they come back, they are welcome," DeGraff said.

DeGraff said the experience has been transformative for hosts as well.

"Being a host family allows people to become better listeners, communicators and more globally engaged," she said. "It comes down to three things: knowledge, empathy and appreciation."

Carolyn Dahm, who coordinated student-host matching, spoke to the generosity she has witnessed over the years. She described hosts preparing home-country meals for homesick students, opening their tables to friends and creating spaces filled with warmth and laughter.

"It's the photos and stories from those moments that carry me through difficult days," Dahm said. Some hosts, she added, reach out after taking time off to

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OFFICE OF ADMISSIONS REVAMPS VISUALS, RENEWS FOCUS ON STUDENT LIFE IN ADVERTISING MATERIALS

YUVRAJ SHAH / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

A variety of communications and marketing material used by Middlebury College Admissions, including a new multi color viewbook, titled "You. Vermont. The World."

By YUVRAJ SHAH
Managing Editor

For the 11,458 students who applied to become members of the class of 2030 and 2030.5, a range of new visuals, written materials and communication styles met them, whether they visited the college in person or only interacted with Middlebury online.

Replacing a set of advertising materials that had been in circulation for nearly five years, the new visuals focus less on Vermont imagery and make greater use of student testimonials, academic offerings, and college life, and are a collaborative effort between the Office of Admissions and the Office of Communications and Marketing.

"So much of Middlebury's previous marketing material was very focused on, like look at how beautiful this place is, look at these pretty buildings, and that's great. Certainly, this is a beautiful place, but we didn't think it was necessarily doing anything beyond just showing off pretty buildings," said Shannon Palmer, associate director of admissions, in an interview with The Campus. "We wanted it to feel a little bit less like something that you might pick up at a B&B [an Airbnb]."

The central focus of the new admissions material uses a color palette inspired by some of the shades of photos taken around the college campus.

"One of the light blues was taken from a sky shot, I think one of the pink values was taken from a sunset shot. And so we wanted to have the colors feel reflective of this place too, but also be fun and bold and graphic," Palmer added.

Visitors to Middlebury College's admissions office at Emma Willard House are presented with an updated large viewbook, titled "You. Vermont. The World," which includes the new color palette.

However, this is not limited to students who physically visit Vermont. Counsellors travel with updated advertising materials, including a more compact, square viewbook.

"When we are traveling, we'll take information along with us, including that big view book ... and then the square travel piece, which was born out of a need for having something lightweight for travel, because we are traveling significant distances," Palmer said. "If you're traveling internationally, you want to have something lightweight.

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Golden Rule Mead sources local ingredients to create unique beverages
By KATRINA SCHWARZ

Henry Sheldon hosts traveling book club
By SAGE KELLER

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SPECS Panther Column — Let's talk about attraction
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OPINIONS

Recentering learning when we talk about grades
By JASON MITTELL, CATHERINE COMBELLES, KEMI FUENTES- GEORGE, LINUS OWENS and GREG PASK

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Perfectly pink: MCMT's 'Mean Girls'
By LIZI SCHIERMAN

Truth and doubt in 'Bigfoot'
By MADDY RUSSELL and ZEPH SANTIAGO

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SPORTS

Middlebury baseball eyes playoffs with sweep of Wesleyan
By THEO MANIATIS

Women's lacrosse team extends unbeaten streak against Hamilton
By THIE HARTHONO

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OVER 250 STUDENTS PRESENT ORIGINAL RESEARCH AT NINETEENTH ANNUAL SPRING SYMPOSIUM

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get much coverage in the mainstream media," Ambat said in an interview with the Campus. "It was an enriching experience to both share something I've put so much work into, and get glimpses into the breadth of incredible academic work being done on campus."

On another floor of BiHall, 10 students from the German Department shared their J-Term trip to Germany and Namibia. Their research took them from Hamburg, Germany, to Swakopmund, Namibia, to examine the impact of the 20th-century genocide of the Herero and Nama people. The students met with hotel workers, local activists and professors to understand how German influences still shape Namibian society. Presenters discussed the impact of German influence on modern-day Namibia: in architecture, with Bavarian Chalets permeating Swakopmund, and business, with the branding of the supermarket chain Wormannbrock reading "making your life better since 1894."

"I got really excited during my presentation," Christopher Facteau '28, a participant in the Namibia trip, said. "I got to talk about what I think is one of the coolest, most interesting things happening in the world because I don't think many people know about it. I had to be able to share what I have learned from my own research as well as from my own experiences, which felt like the pinnacle of liberal arts."

Students from the Rohatyn Center for Global Affairs, professors from the Economics department and Senior Febs packed into BiHall 219 to watch Luke Parkerson '26.5, a former Rohatyn Global Fellow, presented about the democratic implications of the expansion of fiber optic cables in Nigeria and South Africa. In his presentation, Parkerson identified how expanding fiber optic networks increased government contact in rural areas.

LAN WANG / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

Students gathered in the Great Hall reading poster presentations from their peers, while sampling baked goods.

"It's very satisfying and inspiring to see my students present, and I just feel really proud of them. They're doing great work," Amit Prakash, visiting assistant professor of global studies, said in an interview with The Campus.

For many students, the symposium not only serves as a way to show off their hard work but also as a celebration of community.

"It was outstanding, really great, to see students, both of whom I know and who are new to me. One of my favorite things is watching them and their peers really being encouraging and supportive," Tim Mosehauer, senior assistant director at the Center for Careers and Internships, said in an interview with The Campus.

"Having people to come over to ask questions makes me feel like research is important. It makes me feel like the work that I'm doing is sort of like a contribution, and it feels like a very small community, like a family that supports each other. That makes me really happy to continue my project with my professor. and be more like curious about other types of types of research," Estaban Catano Molina '27, a presenter, said.

Molina participated in a multi-year study of Vermont maple sap microbial colonization patterns in maple sap to better understand how sap environmental factors impact the seasonal fluctuation of bacterial strains.

Likewise, the symposium unites the Middlebury community, giving students windows into their peers' hard work. Belin Tate '26 spent a semester last spring in Kenya tracking hyenas and helping farmers protect their sheep flocks. Presenting at the symposium allowed Tate to showcase her hard work.

"I don't know what my friends study all day and looking around I get to learn more. It's like a taste into their life and their research, and it's so cool to see that. Hopefully they get to care a little bit more about hyena conservation," Tate wrote in a message to The Campus.

In a room moderated by President Ian Baucom, Heba Qalandari '28 presented on the Cartesian dualism explored in the mind and body in alchemy. Qalandari asked audience members to challenge contextual versus methodological learning and question what it means to be an expert. She explained how growing up, she discovered alchemy by mastering SAT math study cards because she could only answer questions with math instead of asking new questions. In the sparsely filled classroom dotted with anthropology professors, we all learned how to dismantle our own perceptions of the world.

"I just realized that things are not as solid or defined as they seem. I just liked that alchemy is connected to that mental and spiritual," Qalandari mentioned in her presentation.

The 'Six-Minute' Transformation

For the community members who help moderate, it's a great way to get educated about niche biology, groundbreaking neuroscience or the sustainability challenges of living in rural America. Some even wish that it were made even more accessible by posting student presentations online.

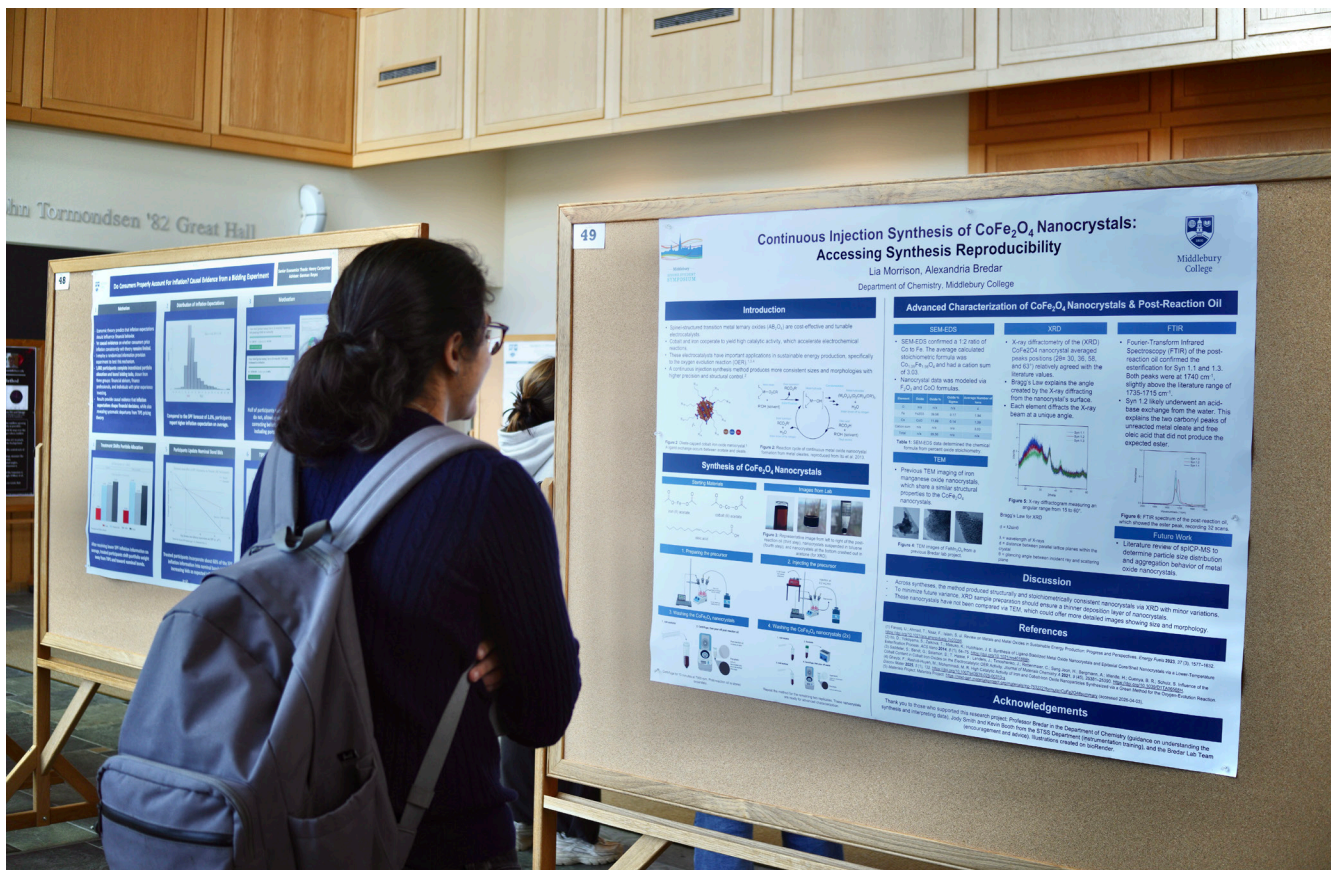
The event even drew praise from former Vermont Governor Jim Douglas '72, who noted the college's evolution since his own graduation.

"We didn't have a symposium when I was a student here many years ago," Douglas remarked. "It's a tremendous opportunity for students to talk about their research and get questions or reactions to it. It's a program that is a great one for the college. I regret that the time is so brief."

For the faculty watching from the sidelines, the symposium is a study of student growth. Professor of Anthropology Michael Sheridan, a co-organizer of the 2026 student symposium, noted how the thesis and senior research presentation process fundamentally transforms his students.

"The highlight for me is always watching students realize that they are the experts of their topic," Sheridan remarked. "It happens at about the six-minute mark...you see a transformation come over them when they realize, 'I can do this.'...that emerging expertise is exactly why we're here to celebrate."

"The symposium is not about scholarly exploration, really, it's about presenting people," Sheridan added.



Middlebury hosted it's 19th annual Spring Symposium on April 17.

LAN WANG / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

A HOME AWAY FROM HOME: FRIENDS OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS MARKS 25 YEARS

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rejoin the program. "Keep me on your list for spring — I'll be ready in a year."

Students echoed the program's impact. Munira Nurbhai '28 said arriving at Middlebury felt uncertain at first, but having a host family helped her find a sense of belonging.

"They took me in as a daughter and never made me feel like a stranger," Nurbhai said, emphasizing that connection does not require sameness.

For Anastasiia Demchenki '28, the experience helped ease the challenges of adjusting to life abroad.

"Moving abroad is the biggest step in becoming an adult, yet it can make you feel most like a child," Demchenki said. "Having a host family to guide you makes all the difference. Strangers become friends, and differences become strengths."

Foley closed the event by reflecting on the program's broader significance, particularly in today's global climate.

"Community develops out of care and concern, and is about being vulnerable and curious," Foley said. She described the relationships formed through the program as a form of "citizen diplomacy," offering connection and understanding in uncertain times.

Over 25 years, the FIS Host Program has connected more than 1,200 students from 90 countries with host families across the region. More than a logistical pairing, the program is rooted in a simple premise: helping people feel known and welcomed.

The FIS Host Program remains a central part of campus life and is open to international students each fall. Community members interested in becoming host families can contact the ISSS office for more information.

COURTESTY PHOTO / JOÃO GASPAR CALADO

ISSS hosted a reception attended by students and host partners to celebrate the 25th year anniversary of the FIS Host Program.

Office of Admissions revamps visuals, renews focus on student life in advertising materials

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So the travel piece is designed to be easy to carry and have a lot of information kind of packed into that."

A large part of this refreshed communications push centers on the visitor experience at Emma Willard.

Wall graphics, which previously featured artwork and photographs of Vermont landscapes, are being gradually replaced with practical information to help students learn more about the college, including student demographics and details about Vermont's seasons.

One graphic, focusing on locally sourced ingredients at Middlebury Dining, informs visitors about the 5,283 gallons of Vermont milk consumed on campus each year, along with statistics on local ice cream, eggs, beef, apple cider, cheese, apples and creemees.

Additionally, the office contains new fact sheets covering undergraduate research opportunities, Febs, academic culture, pre-health and pre-law advising, and engineering programs at Dartmouth and Columbia.

"We want people to feel like the visit experience is not only just like walking around and looking at a nice campus, but also that they're really getting information out of it and drawing attention to the things that, you know, you can't squeeze into a single tour in your half-hour information session," Palmer added.

The new multi-color communications style is seen in a variety of places across the Admissions office, including college-store discount coupons, "Where to Eat?" handouts, and even directional signs.

"The positive feedback we've received from near and far suggests that it's resonating with students and their families, especially the

TOM NEVINS / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

Emma Willard House, the home of Middlebury College Admissions. The acceptance rate for the class of 2030 and 2030.5 hit 17%, a five year high.

color palette, which was inspired by a Vermont sunset, just one of the many unique characteristics of this very special place that the work is designed to evoke," said Avery Waxman, associate vice president for marketing.

For students who cannot visit Vermont before applying to Middlebury, these new marketing materials are available online and are being rolled out across social media channels.

For the college, high-school visits are limited by geographical ability, cost factors, and the knowledge a particular group of students may already have about Middlebury.

"I think for myself and for a lot of the other counselors, we try to balance going to places where we know that we'll have a lot of students who are interested in Middlebury and there's strong interest already with kind of what I would consider travel that is exposing Middlebury to a new audience or to a region or to a section of a city, for example, that might not know about us as much. So each of us plans our travel, hoping at its core to understand the region that we work with," Palmer said.

While the college does work with print communications, it produces significantly less paper than many peer institutions, relying heavily on email communications.

"Our yield emails, for example, are much more focused on things that students probably care about as they're figuring out their college decisions, right? What is the return on investment going to look like in terms of internship opportunities? We have a separate parent flow that answers questions about what it looks like to join, to have your student come in and be in housing," Palmer added.

The acceptance rate for the classes of 2030 and 2030.5 was 17%, a marked increase from the 13.9% for the classes of 2029 and 2029.5. This comes at a time when high school students are applying to more colleges and universities than ever before, thereby decreasing yield rates for colleges across the country.

"We're now seeing students applying to Middlebury who are applying to a much broader range of schools. It's not just the traditional, you know, everybody is applying to Middlebury, is applying to other NESCACs kind of vibe," Palmer noted. "We'll have students turn us down for a huge range of other schools, and some of those schools have really significant marketing kind of machines built into them that Middlebury, as a smaller institution, doesn't necessarily have."

The new multicoloured marketing template is being rolled out across yield events, as the college is currently seeking to secure enrollment deposits from its admitted students.

"This refreshed 'identity' is being brought to life across all of the digital and traditional channels we typically use to engage prospective applicants - including within Emma Willard itself - and has also been applied to the communications received by admitted students for the classes of '30 and '30.5," Waxman added.

In this past admissions cycle, admitted students received postcards from current students and "love letters," in which regional admissions counselors provided personal information to students.

However, as the applicant pool for Middlebury College continues to shrink, a new communications and marketing campaign is helping the college reach areas where it has traditionally seen fewer applications, in the face of an impending demographic cliff affecting the states from which the college has yielded the most students in the past.

"Middlebury has historically drawn from areas that are being heavily impacted by that demographic cliff. So that doesn't help. Middlebury is located in a state that is aging," Palmer said. "However, we have a very strong endowment, we have awesome students, we are a selective institution that will always make our class. We have many thousands more students applying to Middlebury than we can ever have space for."

Nevertheless, the college has continued to successfully fill each of its admitted classes, and is now equipped with a new set of marketing material, as admissions counselors begin recruiting the class of 2031 and 2031.5.

"As we look ahead to the next application cycle, we will continue to lean into this refreshed look and feel that we believe truly distinguishes Middlebury, Vermont and our place in the world," Waxman said.

THE JACK LANGERMAN COMMUNITY FOUNDATION: HONORING A LEGACY

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leverage that into something positive? And so the purpose of our foundation is to continue [Jack's] legacy of bringing people together, sort of strengthening communities, and making sure that everyone has a community. Jack was always one of those people that sort of inherently believed that we're better off when we're together, that the collective can accomplish so much more than the individual, and that a community not only elevates everyone within it but also can help those it encounters," Scott Langerman '87, Jack's father, shared. Langerman has also co-taught the Sports & Society: How Sports Transcend Their Sidelines J-Term class in recent years.

The Jack Langerman Community Foundation centers around advocating and supporting activities and places Jack loved most. It focuses on hosting events and community gatherings surrounding his passions: baseball, education, mentoring, and youth, based in the places he valued most: Maryland, Connecticut, Ohio, Boston, and, Middlebury.

"We look for places and organizations where even a small gesture can make a really huge difference," Langerman said.

At Middlebury, this mission has taken the shape of a Friends of Middlebury Baseball weekend, held annually in April. Following a home baseball game, those connected to the team flock to Mister Ups to celebrate the friendships and memories fostered by the baseball program.

"The event aims to bring Middlebury baseball players, families, and alumni together to connect and celebrate being a part of the program. We do this in partnership with Jack's Foundation because Jack was such a positive presence on our team and instrumental in helping us build a strong team culture," Middlebury Baseball Coach Mike Leonard said.

One of the unique ways the foundation seeks to make a difference is through a series of beers called "Known and Loved," named in honor of the way Jack made others feel. So far, the foundation has created nine different beers.

"We've collaborated with different breweries to create special beers, part of the proceeds from which go to our foundation, but also we get to create this keepsake thing that people get to enjoy together," Langerman said.

The Known and Loved beers have traditionally been served at the Friends of Middlebury Baseball event at Mister Ups and at other foundation-hosted events. This year, Langerman says that the foundation has expanded their vision.

"We thought, wouldn't it be fun to have more places in Middlebury have [the beer] and as a result, we could be more inclusive and open it up to more of the college and the community and hopefully spread our message a little bit. So we came up with this idea that we're calling Known and Loved week," Langerman said.

Throughout the week of April 25, six restaurants in Middlebury will have the Known and Loved beer on tap. Those looking to support the Jack Langerman Community Foundation can visit Mister Ups, Two Brothers Tavern, Mad Taco, Fire and Ice, Shiretown, and American Flatbread to order a beer or simply support the foundation. Anyone who mentions Known and Loved at these locations will receive a discount on their food, and may be eligible to be entered into a raffle hosted by the foundation.

Following the annual Mister Ups Baseball event, Known and Loved week will kick off at Notte on Saturday, April 25, from 9:00-11:30 PM. Langerman hopes that people will continue to spread kindness within the community throughout the rest of the week.

"The idea is to incentivize people to go visit these businesses with the whole concept being: Let's figure out how we bring the college, the community, and our foundation together around this concept of Known and Loved, and trying to make other people feel known and loved," Langerman said.

"As part of all this, we hope that people will use the week to commit random acts of kindness when they can, and just be nice and collaborative and all the things that we want out of people in a community."

Anyone in the community is invited and encouraged to participate in Known and Loved week to celebrate Jack's legacy and spread the feelings of love and joy he valued so deeply.

"He was obviously a very special kid to us, but I think he was to everybody else too. He was a master networker and connector, and he was just sort of the kid that everybody liked having as a teammate and a friend and a classmate. He was just one of those people," Langerman said.

COURTESY PHOTO / SCOTT LANGERMAN

One of the unique ways that the foundation seeks to make a difference is through a series of beers called "Known and Loved," named in honor of the way that Jack made other people feel.

GOLDEN RULE MEAD SOURCES LOCAL INGREDIENTS TO CREATE UNIQUE BEVERAGES

By KATRINA SCHWARZ
Senior Local Editor

"Brew unto others" is more than just a clever play on words for Middlebury's Golden Rule Mead; it is a founding principle of respect for the land and the community. Golden Rule Mead, a meadery located at 8 Elm Street next to Fire & Ice, focuses on producing sustainable, thoughtfully curated meads and maple wine.

The business' cozy tasting room feels more like somebody's home — which it is — than a formal bar. With its squishy couches, resident cat, and lived-in ambience, it offers an intimacy that turns a simple tasting into a neighborhood hang.

"I've been running Golden Rule Mead for seven years now, basically seven years. I moved it to Middlebury six years ago, and I moved it to its current location March 1st of 2020," Alexandre Apfel, the meadery's founder, said.

Mead is one of the oldest known alcoholic beverages, made by fermenting honey with water, and is often referred to as "honey wine".

Apfel brews his meads using Vermont-sourced honey, along with other fruits, herbs and spices from around the state. After years spent in the beer industry, he wanted to explore how local agriculture and produce could be more fully incorporated into beverages.

COURTESY PHOTO / ALEXANDRE APFEL

Alexandre Apfel brews his meads using Vermont sourced honey, along with other fruits, herbs, and spices from around the state.

"There were a couple of meaderies, but orders of magnitude fewer than there are breweries, so I saw an opportunity not just to do something different and add to the conversation, but to be part of a local food system," Apfel said.

He believes that mead provides the perfect opportunity to reflect Vermont's particular character. Apfel sources all of his honey from within the state and works almost exclusively with apiaries from the Champlain Valley, such as Champlain Valley Apiaries, Dancing Bee Gardens and New Haven beekeeper Kirk Webster.

"I like to work with smaller beekeepers, not just because I can make a difference for them for their operation, but also because I find that they aren't moving their hives around... I prefer working with beekeepers who don't do that, and are also applying minimal to no chemical treatments to their hives," he explained.

Aside from mead, Apfel has also dabbled in making maple wine with limited success. Some batches turned out very well, while others were undrinkable, which was an issue he had never experienced before in his years within the beverage industry. After spending time diagnosing potential problems and slowly scaling up production, he hopes to have maple wine back on shelves by the holidays.

Jordan Henry '26 attended a mead tasting with a couple of friends.

"I learned a lot about mead. I didn't really know anything about mead before. It was a yummy, tasteful, fun, and informative experience," Henry said.

After tasting seven different types of meads, she was able to identify a few favorites and purchased a bottle of Wild Light Mead.

COURTESY PHOTO / ALEXANDRE APFEL

Mead is one of the oldest alcoholic beverages, often referred to as "honey wine".

"I really loved comparing all of the meads. There is a specific order that you drink them in. Once you finished a drink, [Apfel] would give you the next," Henry added.

Apfel shared that a highlight of running Golden Rule Mead has been the community he has found along the way.

"I've met some really amazing, hardworking people, and pretty inspiring people through my work by connecting with the local beekeepers, orchardists... It's amazing to see how driven and devoted and empowered a lot of these people are," Apfel said.

As he's navigated the challenges of being a small business owner, Afpel shared that he has spent time reflecting on why he chooses to curate and produce mead for the community.

"I'm glad to have come around to an answer that satisfies me, which is working within that local food system," he explained.

Outside of his role as founder of the Golden Rule Mead, Apfel has started volunteering with Addison Country Relocalization Network (ACORN), which aims to improve food systems by empowering local farmers.

"I started working with ACORN in September and that has been my favorite thing, let me tell you, wow. What an amazing group of people to work with, I believe in the mission, and they're great people, and there is so much good food through that space," he said.

Open from 2 - 6 PM on Fridays and Saturdays, Golden Rule Mead offers tastings, glasses of mead, and bottles for sale. Patrons are invited to bring their own refillable containers with a capacity of up to 64 fl oz. Students who are 21+ should stop by to sample meads and spend a fun afternoon learning whilst sipping.

HENRY SHELDON MUSEUM HOSTS FINAL STOP OF ADDISON COUNTY TRAVELING BOOK CLUB

By SAGE KELLER
Contributing Writer

SAGE KELLER / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

The Henry Sheldon will host a traveling, Vermont based bookclub in late April.

On April 25, the Henry Sheldon Museum will host the final session of the Historic Addison County Traveling Book Club, featuring "Deep North", an edited collection of stories by Brad Kessler about Somali resettlement in Vermont.

The book club, a series that has moved through four local institutions this spring, was created by Olivia Olsen, the public programs and volunteer manager at the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum in Vergennes. Each session pairs a book with the institution hosting it. Previous stops featured Benedict Arnold's "Navy" at Lake Champlain Maritime Museum, "Heaven and Earth Grocery Store" at the Rokeby Museum, and "What You Are Looking For Is" in the Library at the Bixby Memorial Free Library.

For the Sheldon Museum's upcoming session, Allison Cardon — a Mellon Fellow of Public History at the museum —selected "Deep North" intentionally to complement the museum's upcoming immigration exhibit, slated to open in 2027.

Vermont has a more robust Somali community than many people realize according to Cardon, and she hopes the event highlights that connection.

"I wanted to do something about immigration and tell stories that don't really get told or don't get enough play," Cardon said. "Not only the refugee story, which is a particular kind of immigration, but also Somalia. I think that's a really important place in the world right now with an important series of histories and conflicts."

Brian Chesler, who documented the oral histories at the core of the book, will also join the session via Zoom.

"Anyone who shows up will be able to ask him any questions they have about the book itself or the histories within it," Cardon said.

The immigration exhibit grew out of a transformative Mellon Foundation grant secured by Executive Director Coco Moseley, which launched a three-year initiative to develop two new exhibits at the Sheldon — one on Vermont's LGBTQ history and one on the state's immigration history.

Cara Mosier, associate director of the Henry Sheldon Museum, described the book club as part of a broader shift in the museum's community engagement.

"The Sheldon Museum has been part of the Middlebury community for a long time, but for years we were often seen as a quiet place people might pass by without really engaging," Mosier said. "Events like the traveling book club are helping to change that. Instead of waiting for people to come to us, we're getting out into the community and creating opportunities to connect in a more relaxed, meaningful way."

Mosier also spoke about the museum's role as a meeting point between the college and the broader Middlebury community.

"At the Sheldon, we see ourselves as a natural bridge between students and long-time community members," Mosier said. "A shared love of history, art, and learning makes those connections easy and meaningful."

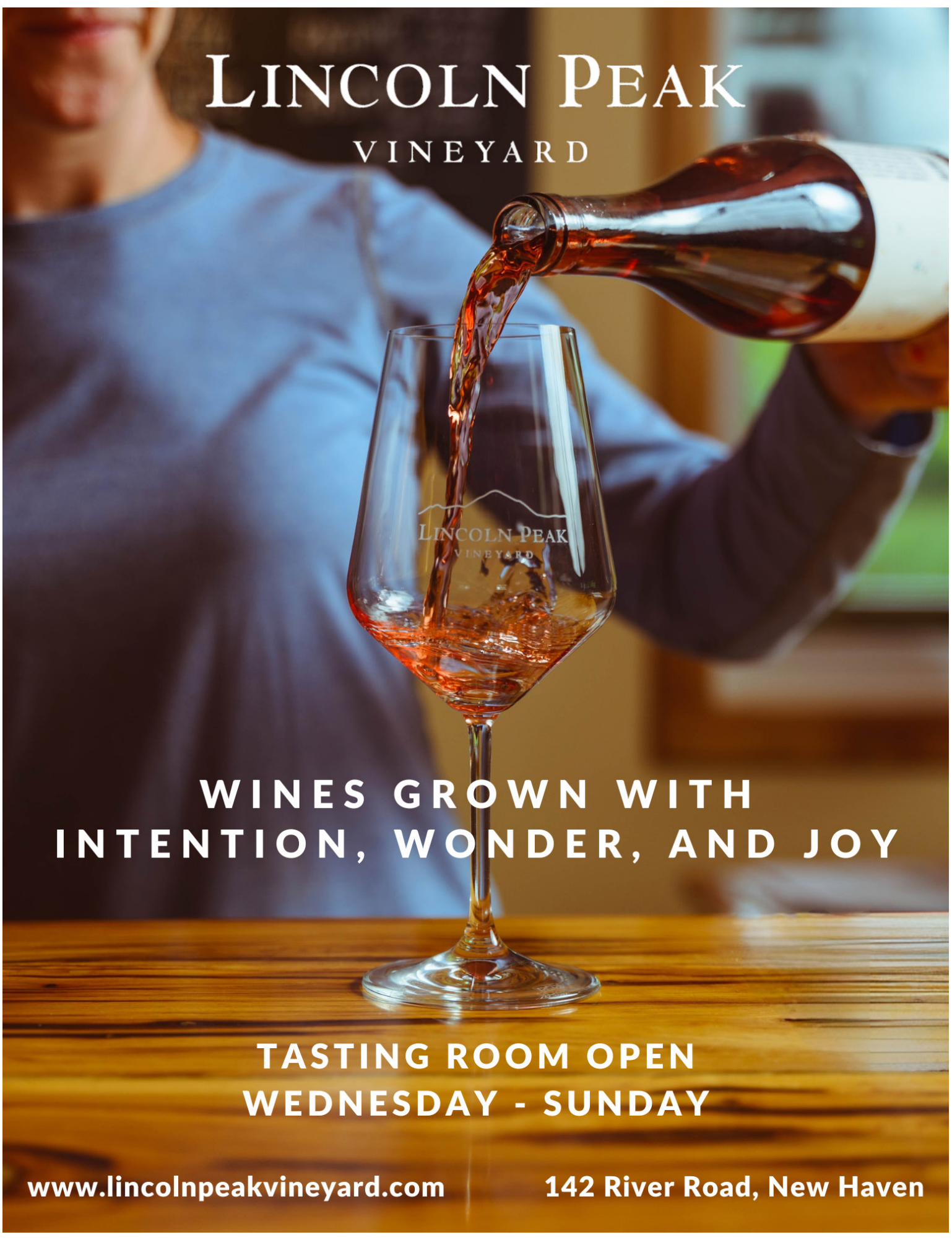
This sentiment similarly resonates with students. Lena Chow '29 said she was excited to hear about an opportunity like this.

"This sounds really interesting. I'll definitely be on the lookout for more events the museum is doing," Chow said.

Cardon described the book club as an attempt to create the kind of communal space that can be hard to find outside of a university setting.

"One of the things that's really important to me is recognizing and honoring that there are very few places where we get to spend intentional time thinking with others," Cardon said. "The classroom is totally one of those places, but those places are kind of hard to find without the scaffolding of an institution like a university."

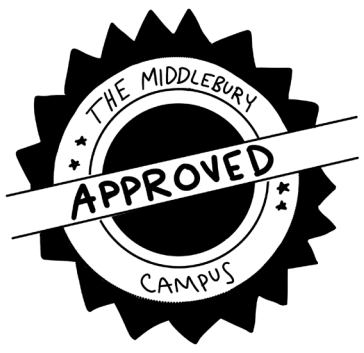
The April 25th session will be the last of this particular series, but Cardon is open to future programming. Students with ideas for a book club can reach out to her at publichistory@henrysheldonmuseum.org. The museum also offers work-study positions and internships for students interested in a longer-term connection with the Sheldon.



ANINA DENTEL-PHAM '27 FOR SGA PRESIDENT

Editorial

The editorial represents the opinion of the Middlebury Campus Editorial Board.



We are excited to announce our endorsement of Anina Dentel-Pham '27 to serve as the next Student Government Association (SGA) President. With deep-rooted experience in SGA and an action-oriented plan, The Campus believes that Dentel-Pham and her vice presidents, Jeffrey Teh '28 and Connor McClellan '28, will represent the student body with enthusiasm and deliver on their promises to enhance student life.

On Monday night, The Campus met with Dentel-Pham's team for 20 minutes to discuss their campaign platform and objectives for next year. Dentel-Pham called in on WhatsApp from Taiwan, where she is currently studying abroad, while her vice presidents attended the meeting in person. The Campus also spoke with her opponents, Bailey Parent '27, and his vice-presidential appointees, Arai Hardy '27 and Omar Jimenez Jr. '27.

Our endorsement plays no role in The Campus' reporting on the presidential election; we are committed to objective journalism in our newsroom and fact-checked arguments in our opinions section.

There were strengths and weaknesses of both candidates, but ultimately, the majority of the editorial board voted in favor of Dentel-Pham and her team.

A large part of the conversation and subsequent decision centered around experience and prior commitment to SGA. Both Dentel-Pham and Teh have been active members in SGA, with Dentel-Pham serving as the former vice president and Teh as the acting speaker of the senate. These years of experience should not be underestimated.

That being said, the Campus agreed that there is something undeniably refreshing about new faces entering the race. After a less-than-usual SGA administration, there needs to be a serious readjustment of the SGA's priorities and agenda. Parent and his team bring a fresh perspective to the table, emphasizing that SGA is not a political organization as much as a student-oriented service role.

However, Parent's lack of familiarity with SGA and its institutional structures could act as a major barrier to making tangible progress. While his campaign promises, such as increasing the number of laundry machines and printers and extending dining hall hours, are popular, his team lacked concrete action steps to implement them.

Parent had good ideas but was missing action steps, relying on ideas of what they are going to do rather than how they are actually going to do it. For example, both campaigns include plans to make laundry facilities more accessible across campus, a frequent complaint among students who often encounter broken machines or lack laundry facilities in their buildings. Dentel-Pham's team has already given the process some thought, contacting business services and ResLife to determine what is and isn't feasible.

Although some of Dentel-Pham's ideas, such as the student bar, are unlikely to be completed by the end of her presidency, we believe her SGA experience and sheer commitment to advancing her ideas will lay the groundwork for a much-needed SGA refresh.

We were impressed by Dentel-Pham's continued ability to solicit feedback, even when she is in Taiwan. Her policy proposal to increase funding for LSAT tutoring came about after a student from the Middlebury Law Club reached out to express disappointment at having been previously rejected for SGA funding. Dentel-Pham has said she wants to codify this funding in future SGA legislation.

It is undeniable that Dentel-Pham's campaign has intentionality and purpose. She has been planning her candidacy, with campaign photos and videos dating back to before she left for Taiwan. Although this is not a requirement for any SGA campaign, it demonstrates Dentel-Pham's strategic competitiveness and confidence, qualities essential to an effective SGA President. In the meeting itself, Dentel-Pham demonstrated this energy by bringing rehearsed talking points and closing remarks, reiterating that "no task is above or below" her team. Her VPs, dressed in identical outfits, also distributed handouts for reference and asked The Campus questions aimed at improving our communication with the SGA, indicating a thoroughness that exceeded Parent's.

Nevertheless, several of our editors did not vote for Dentel-Pham and stressed that Parent's campaign brings a fresh face to the SGA. We cannot ignore that Dentel-Pham served as Vice President under Meyers' administration, which has not achieved a majority of its campaign promises. When asked about these shortcomings, Dentel-Pham emphasized that her own leadership style differs from current leadership, and that she wants to maintain visibility, reinstating consistent communication and doing everything in her power to regain the lost trust in SGA.

We are surprised at Dentel-Pham's choice to select Teh and McClellan as her running mates. While Teh brings undeniable enthusiasm and experience, he will be abroad for the full year. During the meeting, he claimed he would serve as VP asynchronously for the entire year, to which Anina quickly rebutted, saying she would "replace him" in the spring.

McClellan, a player on the football team, will be abroad in the spring. When asked about his motivation for joining the SGA, he said that until Dentel-Pham reached out to him, he did not know anything about it.

The Board is concerned that Dentel-Pham might be forced to shoulder the burden of her appointed VPs' absence, undermining her potential effectiveness as a representative of the student body and her ability to enact real change.

Despite this scrutiny, The Campus does not foresee Dentel-Pham disappearing after the election. She is passionate, driven and ready to handle the role of president. She has clearly been preparing for this since the fall, so when you go to cast your vote on Thursday, April 23, we urge you to vote for Anina Dentel-Pham. We believe that she will take actionable steps to improve our SGA.

Editor's note: This endorsement was written before the April 22 presidential debate. Any new campaign material expressed during the debate was not a factor in this endorsement.

RECENTERING LEARNING WHEN WE TALK ABOUT GRADES

Op-Ed

***Jason Mittell** is a Professor of Film & Media Culture, **Catherine Combelles** is a Professor of Biology, **Kemi Fuentes-George** is a Professor of Political Science, **Linus Owens** is a Professor of Sociology, and **Greg Pask** is an Associate Professor of Biolgy.*

This spring, The Campus has seen numerous articles and editorials discussing grading, ranging from coverage of the Economics department's new grading policies, to calls for addressing grade inflation with campus-wide grade quotas and caps. The draft of our new strategic plan explicitly calls for action around this issue, with an action item reading "Conduct a review of grading practices, including the causes and consequences of grade inflation, and develop recommendations to support academic rigor." The Campus's March 5 editorial puts forward a welcome "call for a more nuanced conversation about grading standards beyond letter grades or percentage cutoffs."

We are members of an informal group of faculty that has been having such nuanced conversations over the past decade, comparing notes on how we approach grades across disciplines and discussing alternative grading practices. Throughout these conversations, we always try to ground our discussions around a couple of key questions: what are grades for?, and do our grading practices help accomplish our educational goals?

Reading these recent discussions around grading inspired us to pose those questions again in a public forum. While the specifics might vary widely by discipline and even type of course, the foundational answer to the first question is that grades are supposed to indicate how well a student has learned the material, both to the student and to other parties. Pedagogically, communicating to students how well they understand the material should help facilitate learning — in fact, every aspect of our courses and curriculum (and beyond) should aim toward that goal. Within a course, grades can be one way to reward students for successfully demonstrating their learning, signal when a student might need to deepen or shift their understanding, or potentially inspire students to put in the work. Within a larger curriculum, grades can be one way among many to signal competencies for student readiness for other courses, and ideally could help students assess their own educational strengths and weaknesses. In most cases, a top grade is commonly understood as a signal to students and anyone else looking at their transcripts that the student demonstrated achieving all of the course's learning objectives at a high level, which is not an easy feat in most Middlebury courses.

None of these goals of facilitating or communicating learning are helped by placing a cap on the number of A's given in a course; instead, such a policy would result in a number of pedagogical problems. First, we feel strongly that it is not a faculty member's job to rank students against one another, particularly within a course; instead, we strive to evaluate each student based on the standards and expectations established for the course (hopefully with sufficient clarity so students know what is expected of them as learners). One of the advantages of a small college like Middlebury is that, even in "large courses" (which are far smaller than those found at most universities), we can treat each student's educational experience on its own terms and strive to calibrate their grades to match what they demonstrated they learned. That is why the idea of combatting "grade inflation" by limiting the number of A's given in any class (as suggested in the April 16 letter, following Harvard's recent policy recommendation) runs counter to our core goal to facilitate learning — which students who achieved all of a course's learning objectives at a high level should be denied an A, just because more than 20% of the students in the course had similarly high achievement? We do not want to make our courses become sites where students compete for limited high marks, as that will directly impede learning. Indeed, this approach suggests that grading should primarily function to facilitate gatekeeping rather than learning.

Second, there is a deeper critique of grading that is worth discussing. Research suggests that grades are actually a poor extrinsic motivator for learning, and often impede successful teaching. Effective learning requires creativity and risk-taking, an emphasis on an iterative process, and learning from mistakes — all of which run counter to centering grades in our pedagogy. Other colleges, including Reed, Brown and Sarah Lawrence, have adopted unconventional approaches to communicating learning to students, and all of us signed below (as well as other Middlebury faculty) have similarly explored various forms of "ungrading" to notable success in our classes.

Third, the main problem with thinking of grades as the only marker of student learning, and advocating for a highly competitive (as opposed to collaborative) approach to grading and gatekeeping, is that it mistakes the measure (grades) for the goals (learning). If the grade is what students want, and they know there are a limited number of A's available, that incentivizes students to cut corners, either in their mental health and life balance or academically. We have all seen multiple surveys showing persistent problems with Academic Honesty on campus. Adopting a cutthroat, gatekeeping approach to grading will only exacerbate such behaviors that run counter to Middlebury's longstanding commitment to academic integrity.

Grading caps and quotas do not facilitate learning. Instead, we suggest an exercise for our faculty colleagues. At the end of the semester once grades are submitted, take a look at your roster and ask yourself if the grade next to each student's name matches how well they met your learning expectations. Particularly, do you feel confident that each student who received an A accomplished the course's learning objectives at a high level? If not, then you might want to rethink how you structure and assess assignments for the next time you teach the course — and each of us is happy to discuss strategies with you for doing that more effectively. For instance, we have found ways to recognize students who start at a low level of proficiency in the field but demonstrate a stellar learning trajectory by the end. But if you believe that each of your students earned their A's through their learning excellence, then congratulate yourself — particularly if more than 20% of students got those well-earned A's. That's a sign of a great course (and great students), facilitating and demonstrating high levels of learning!

The discourse around grade inflation seems to presume that it's a result of grades now being awarded for lower standards, than was the case in some idealized past era of when professors uniformly adopted a higher standard of educational "rigor." But consider an alternative cause: what if high grades are an indication of excellent students encountering highly effective pedagogy that inspires and helps them to learn at high levels of achievement? Might grades be so high less from inflation, but more due to increasing educational achievement? While we welcome ongoing conversations about grading at Middlebury, we hope that we can focus on our shared institutional and educational goals: to facilitate high levels of learning and academic achievement, so that all students might be able to meet and exceed our expectations.

Editor's Note: Jason Mittell is currently the faculty advisor for The Middlebury Campus

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READ MORE ADDISON INDEPENDENT, LESS NEW YORK TIMES

Op-Ed

__Lily Jensen__ is a member of the class of 2028 and a staff writer.

As a Middlebury student, you have access to the Addison Independent – it's time to use it.

Reading the news is a ritual many of us take very seriously. Almost always, I hear the same publications over and over: the New York Times, the Washington Post, the Guardian, the Wall Street Journal, etc. These publications are certainly important, as they cover national and international news. Sure, sometimes they'll zoom in on a small community case study, but it's always brought back to why this matters to all Americans. Local news doesn't need to pose this question — it matters to these Americans here because this is where they live.

Earlier this academic year, all Middlebury students got access to the Addison Independent. It joins a long list of other publications from databases to research journals to national newspapers. These subscriptions are widely used both inside and outside the classroom. While I appreciate the "global citizen" approach Middlebury prides itself on, I believe there should also be a stronger focus on being not just impermanent residents, but citizens of Middlebury, Addison County, and Vermont.

Local news has been proven to be an essential part of preserving democracy; it decreases polarization, turns out the vote, and makes real change. In addition, local journalism has the power to bind communities together, lift them up, and build immense resilience. No one can report on local issues the way local reporters can.

The Addison Independent isn't just any local paper, though — it shines on the regional and national scale, winning prestigious awards. In 2025, they won 1st place for General Excellence from the New England News and Press Association in the category of newspapers with a circulation of 5,000 or more. The paper excels through its pages of upcoming events, news, sports, arts & leisure, obituaries, and so much more. The paper is importantly independent; it's not owned by any conglomerate media source, but rather by a local family that has passed it down through generations.

Journalism as an industry is under immense threat. That threat is not for the huge publications, but for the medium and small. Countless small newspapers are closing everywhere because people are losing interest, reading less print media, and devaluing local news. According to the 2025 Medill State of Local News report, 148 local newspapers had closed or merged in the past year. That's about 2 newspaper disappearances a week.

In my time working with the Addison Independent, through the New Perennial's CRAF program, I've found that this paper has not been exempt from this epidemic. Recently, the newspaper has been forced to get creative to secure sufficient funding through initiatives such as the Addy All Stars program and its new nonprofit. People often have the misconception that their taxpayer dollars are going to the paper — but local journalism is a private business that requires our support. This is why it is incredible that the College has taken a huge step to support the Addison Independent.

It's up to us to take advantage of this resource, unblock that Indy News email you get every Friday, and get educated on what's happening closest to us, right here in Addison County. Knowledge about local events, town planning, artists, and more is important to seek out because it fosters a reciprocal, fruitful, and vibrant life beyond campus. It's easy to forget that we actually live here among real people who want to engage and share stories. More than an economic backing, it's an orientation to living.

Since I became a regular reader of the Addison Independent, I've realized there is more to it than just a place-based, rational argument for reading these articles — there is an emotional one too. The local paper is not always flowers and roses, and it doesn't present a utopia. It is real, but it is also hopeful, especially when I feel like everything I read in the national news is deeply disheartening. I'm not arguing that you should stop reading the New York Times, but there is a lot of hope, meaning, and connection that can be found in the pages of the Addison Independent.

Take one step to becoming a more intentional local citizen:

Go to the LOGIN/My Account page on addisonindependent.com

Enter your Middlebury College email address and the pre-set password: readlocal

Questions? Reach out to Sean at subscriptions@addisonindependent.com

Reviving A Tradition, Rekindling A Community

Op-Ed

__Namrita Ghani and Jeffrey Teh__ are members of the class of 2028 and serve on the Student Government Association.

At a small liberal arts college, "community" is more than just a buzzword we repeat on tours to prospective students — it is a promise we make to one another. Community is what draws students to campuses like Middlebury in the first place: the idea that learning extends beyond the classroom into shared meals, lifelong friendships are formed through spontaneous conversations across dorm hallways, and experiences like square dancing during orientation create collective memories. Yet, since the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020, that promise has rung increasingly hollow. Instead of one cohesive campus community, we've begun breaking down into smaller, more insular clusters. Walk into Proctor, Ross or Atwater at dinnertime, and you will see a campus divided. We sit in familiar corners with the same teammates and lab partners, shielded by laptop screens and noise-cancelling headphones. We have become a collection of high-functioning silos: small, comfortable social groups which rarely intersect.

This is not to say that a sense of community at Middlebury no longer exists. Rather, it exists in pockets: athletic teams, friend groups, academic cohorts and clubs all foster meaningful relationships. The challenge is that these groups rarely connect in ways that create a unified campus culture. We live in polite coexistence, but we are missing the final puzzle piece that makes the College feel like a home for all of us.

One of the clearest indications of this unraveling is the absence of large-scale traditions which bring together members from across the Middlebury community. Before the pandemic, Middlebury hosted school-wide picnics in both fall and spring terms. These events brought together students, faculty, and staff in a shared space, offering a rare opportunity to step outside routine and build connections across social and institutional lines. For the past six years, this tradition has been absent — but not forgotten.

At the Spring meeting between the Student Government Association (SGA) and Board of Trustees (BoT) in March, this lack of campus-wide cohesion was raised as a primary concern. The consensus is clear: we cannot wait for a community to form by accident. We have to build it with care and effort.

SGA's solution is both simple and intentionally disruptive. We are reviving the all-school community picnic on April 30 by shutting down all three dining halls and replacing them with an outdoor barbeque on Hepburn Road. What makes this initiative special is its inclusivity. By providing food and a central gathering space, the picnic removes many of the barriers to participation in campus life. It is not tied to a specific group, club or identity. It is for the entire Middlebury community — students, faculty, staff, and their families. In a campus environment where social circles can feel fixed, this kind of openness matters.

We acknowledge that a single event on a single day of the school year cannot fully resolve the deeper issues of disconnection on campus. But it is recognition that building community requires intentional effort, and that collective traditions play a crucial role in sustaining it.

Equally important is our commitment to making this more than a one-time revival. Through legislation that will endure long after our time on campus, the SGA intends to establish the picnic as an annual event. This will ensure that it becomes a consistent part of campus life for years to come. If Middlebury is to live up to its name as a leading liberal arts institution, it must invest in spaces that bring us together across differences. Bringing back the community picnic is about more than food or good weather. It is about reclaiming the shared sense of belonging we need now more than ever.

SPECS Panther Column — Let's Talk About Attraction

Op-Ed

__Emilia Zenker and Laila Almefty-Hernandez__ are members of the class of 2026 and SPECS peer-educators.

At SPECS, we talk a lot about sex — the importance of regular STI testing, the nuances of consent, birth control choices, pleasure and more — but not as much about attraction and how it manifests beyond sexual experiences. In celebration of Asexuality Awareness Day, which took place on April 6, we are dedicating this month's SPECS Panther article to discussing the intricacies of attraction and defining asexuality.

To begin, we all have different attraction-based positions, meaning we experience attraction in different ways. Throughout our lives, different forms of attraction can impact our experiences and relationships. Sexual attraction is just one form of attraction; countless other types are always present and informing our experiences. Some of the other forms of attraction are:

Aesthetic attraction, which is based on the aesthetic appreciation of objects, people, nature, etc. and is commonly associated with a sensation of awe.

Romantic attraction, which is often marked by the inclination to be romantically involved with a person/persons.

Platonic attraction, which is non-romantic/non-sexual and grounded in deep friendships and emotional closeness.

Sexual attraction is a form of attraction indicating sexual desire and sexual expression.

Emotional attraction, which is based on the desire to connect with someone on a meaningful level and is driven by their personal qualities, interests, or morals.

Multiple forms of attraction can be present and intersect at various moments throughout someone's life. For example, one may feel platonic and sexual attraction toward a friend and aesthetic attraction toward the beauty of a medieval altarpiece. Importantly, attraction is non-hierarchical, meaning that there is not one form of attraction that trumps others. Sex educator and author of Ace: What Asexuality Reveals About Desire, Society, and the Meaning of Sex, Angela Chen, discusses the idea of compulsory sexuality, which she describes as "a set of assumptions and behaviors that support the idea that every normal person is sexual, that not wanting (socially approved) sex is unnatural and wrong, and that people who don't care about sexuality are missing out on an utterly necessary experience." While sex is important for some people, the assumption that it is everyone's primary form of attraction is incorrect. Society conditions us to believe that sexual attraction is the most important type of attraction in human relationships, but this idea is harmful both to the asexual (ace) community and the allosexual community (encompassing those who experience sexual attraction) alike.

Recognizing the different types of attraction can help destabilize compulsory sexuality and uplift asexual voices who experience non-sexual pleasure. While people have differing definitions of asexuality, it's commonly understood as an umbrella term that encompasses people who experience little to no sexual attraction. Many ace people describe joy in identifying with the asexual community and embracing their own attraction-based positions.

Importantly, asexuality is not a deficit, but an equally rewarding experience of attraction and pleasure. To explain further, author Sarah Costello writes that "It [asexuality] can lead towards much more resilient communities. Rather than just relying on one single person, your sexual or romantic partner, to provide so many different things for you, you have a web of people who are providing you with all sorts of different things." There is also not one single form of asexuality, similarly to how allosexual people display a wide variety of desires and attractions. Asexuality, like any spectrum, encompasses a wide variety of identities and individuals.

As we discussed, there are countless attraction-based positions, and we hope this article can help flatten the socially constructed hierarchy that devalues non-sexual attraction. However, this is just an introduction to asexuality — to better understand it, refer to some of the resources we list below:

Ace: What Asexuality Reveals About Desire, Society, and the Meaning of Sex by Angela Chen

Sounds Fake but Okay: An Asexual and Aromantic Perspective on Love, Relationships, Sex, and Pretty Much Anything Else by Sarah Costello and Kayla Kaszyca

Refusing Compulsory Sexuality: A Black Asexual Lens on Our Sex-Obsessed Culture by Sherronda J. Brown

Blog: The Asexual Agenda

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"SOMETHING VERY BAD IS GOING TO HAPPEN": THE DATING RECESSION MEETS "CARRIE"-INSPIRED GORE

By PHOEBE ADLER
Staff Writer

Be honest. If you were looking at your wedding invitations and you saw the words "Don't marry him" scrawled on the back, would you go through with it? Director Haley Z. Boston explores this question and many more surrounding family, relationships and the gravity of marital commitment in her new horror series "Something Very Bad is Going to Happen," currently streaming on Netflix.

The show follows Rachel (Camila Morrone) and Nicky (Adam DiMarco), a young married couple who travel to DiMarco's family's vacation home days before their wedding. Rachel, who is planning, along with Nicky, a low-key, intimate wedding, begins to feel paranoid about whether marriage is the right decision for her.

The cast and production team are star-studded. Viewers will recognize Morrone from TV Shows such as "Daisy Jones and the Six", where she played Camila Dunne and DiMarco, who starred in Season 2 of "The White Lotus" as Albie Di Grasso, and who recently played Peter in "Overcompensating." Additionally, Weronika Tofilska, the Polish director and screenwriter who worked on TV shows such as "Baby Reindeer" and movies such as "Love Lies Bleeding," is the lead director. The executive producers might arguably be the most notable names to come out of this cast and crew – Matt and Ross Duffer, also known as The Duffer Brothers, the duo behind the massive Netflix hit "Stranger Things". "'Something Very Bad is Going to Happen" is their first work since "Stranger Things" wrapped its fifth and final season after nine years of success.

Much of the show stemmed from Boston's own fear of marrying the wrong person, but in terms of inspiration, she drew from an unlikely source: her parents' marriage. In an interview with The Hollywood Reporter, Boston elaborated on this source, explaining that "They have a really wonderful marriage. They've been together for 40 years, and they sort of unintentionally put a lot of pressure on me by showing me that true love exists. I was always weighing my romantic experiences against this sort of impossible standard...I was just thinking a lot about what makes someone the right person."

The chemistry between Morrone and DiMarco is, almost surprisingly, amazing. Viewers might expect that in a show filled with horror, there would be inherently awkward dynamics between the characters, even if they are engaged to one another. But these two defy the assumption. I could easily see them starring alongside one another in a rom-com with the same level of connection.

Furthermore, Morrone is fantastic. To play a role like Rachel requires lots of preparation and research. Boston gave Morrone a list of movies to study prior to filming, including "Funny Games," "All My Friends Hate Me," and "Carrie." Additionally, Boston and Morrone worked together to develop the character of Rachel, with Morrone noting that "she was reminded of girlfriends who felt a 'crippling pressure' walking down the aisle, as if something very bad were going to happen if they said, 'I do.'"

The show taps into the larger conversation around the relationship between millennials and Gen-Z and marriage rates in America, which have been declining since the 1950s, but also the "dating recession," demonstrating a lack of active dating among young adults as well as a large amount of concerns among young adults regarding financial concerns, self-confidence and past dating experiences. Boston addresses these issues head-on, and the overwhelming sense of dread you feel from the first minutes of "Something Very Bad is Going to Happen" is only the tip of the iceberg. "My mom told me when I was young that if you marry the wrong person, it could ruin your life," she noted. "That haunted me and still does."

COURTESY PHOTO/SOMETHING VERY BAD IS GOING TO HAPPEN

Camila Morrone in the new Netflix series "Something Very Bad is Going to Happen."

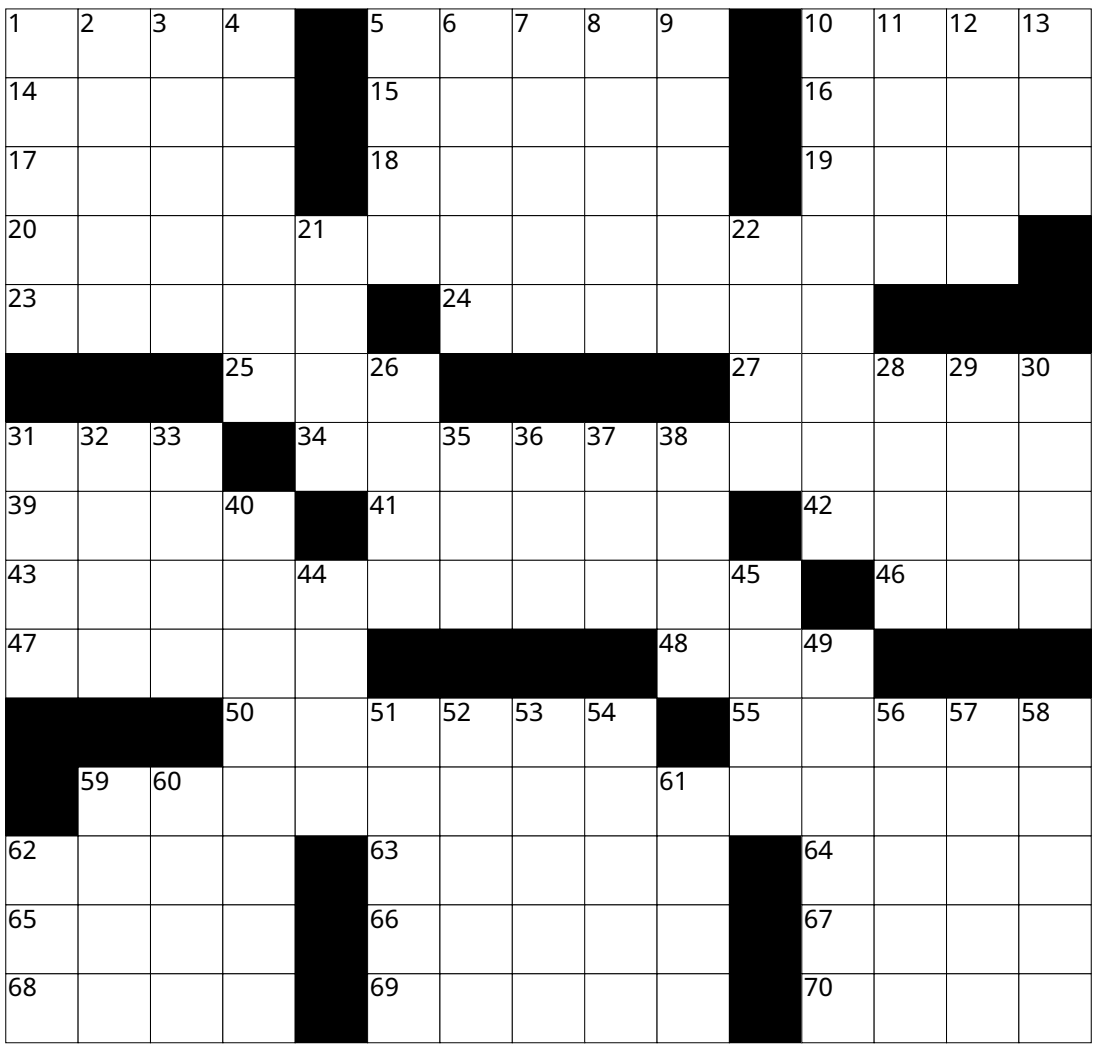
Some critics have noted that while the aforementioned dread is an important aspect of the show, it tends to drag on. With a Time Magazine article titled "'Something Very Bad' Takes Way Too Long to Happen," TV Critic Judy Berman notes that despite the promising cast and production team, "Something Very Bad is Going to Happen" does not deliver the way it was expected to based on the stacked team. As Berman puts it, it is "a stylish yawn."

I think length is a worthwhile critique of this show. Watching it, I certainly found myself waiting anxiously for certain episodes to conclude, but it came less out of boredom and more from feeling overwhelmed by the anxiety-inducing scenes.

"Something Very Bad is Going to Happen" touches on important conversations surrounding marriage today, which, as a fellow Gen-Zer, intrigues me. Notably, the frankly haunting atmosphere viewers experience while watching the show is extremely well-done in my opinion, and this show is worth watching for that, if anything. Just don't go trying to convince your cousin that they shouldn't marry their long-time partner after watching.

Bookends

Avery Goldstein



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5 Placates
10 Sleep under the stars
14 Robert of "The Sopranos"
15 "Have ___!" ("Make yourself at home!")
16 Lyft rival
17 Wrestler John
18 Vermont or Rhode Island
19 12 bottles of wine
20 *Final straw declaration
23 Italian cheese city
24 R&B part
25 Comedian Wong
27 Clarinet cousins
31 Duke's conference, for short
34 *Toy erased with a shake
39 How Costco items are often sold, with "in"
41 Pink-fleshed fruit
42 "Love on the Brain" singer, to fans
43 *St. Patrick's day shout
46 Connecticut WNBA team
47 Outcast
48 Partner of abet
50 Writer Hemingway
55 Sin City, familiarly
59 Most distant places imaginable ... and a hint to this puzzle's starred clues
62 Soft cheese
63 Small stream
64 Tardy
65 Writer White of "White Lotus"
66 Baggy
67 Fencing sword
68 Read it and ___
69 Came to a close
70 "Seasons of Love" musical

DOWN
1 ___ curls
2 Justice Kagan
3 Title with a tilde
4 Emergency room concern
5 Sole payment option at Middlebury's A&W
6 Up and at 'em
7 Dog walker's need
8 Pirate's pal
9 Artery opener
10 Pickle-to-be
11 All that and ___ of chips
12 Netting
13 Season opener?
21 Katniss's friend in District 12
22 "Now I get it"
26 "Let ___!"
28 Singer Redding
29 Light beige
30 Painful place to be kicked
31 Cain's brother
32 Heal
33 Paper holder
35 Baby bear
36 Hardy follower
37 Principal Coleman of "Abbot Elementary"
38 Epic tale
40 Halfway submerged, in a Zac Brown Band hit
44 Canine warnings
45 Honey factory?
49 Casino employee
51 Aristocratic
52 Zac of "The Greatest Showman"
53 Rose
54 The ones over there
56 Nerds flavor
57 When late-night Ross opens
58 Word after top and before music
59 Shallowest of the Great Lakes
60 Brand with a swoosh
61 Squeezed out
62 Mercedes competitor

PERFECTLY PINK: MCMT'S 'MEAN GIRLS'

By LIZI SCHIERMAN
Layout Editor

A whirlwind of pink and a packed audience made for a performance that can only be described as "so fetch." From April 16-18, the Town Hall Theater showcased Middlebury College Musical Theater's (MCMT) performance of "Mean Girls" the musical. Pink posters of cast members dotted the campus in the weeks leading up to opening night, generating excitement for the hilarious and well-known 2000s movie-turned-musical.

Auditions were held over J-term, when the overall prep process began. The spring musical production takes a broader, more inclusive cast — MCMT includes anyone who is interested, even if they've never done musical theater before.

"Mean Girls" has a big ensemble and a large cult following, which is partially why show director Lucy Curtis-Cherry '26.5 was super excited when MCMT got the rights to the show.

"They're such well-known characters so it feels like we have a lot to live up to and we don't just want to copy the movie or the broadway. MCMT always aims to put a spin on things and so I've empowered all my actors to do that, make this character your own while still paying tribute to what it's meant to be," Curtis-Cherry said.

"Mean Girls" follows the story of Cady Heron (Annaliese Houghton '28), who grew up homeschooled in Kenya but moves to the U.S. to attend her last few years of schooling at North Shore High School in Evanston, Illinois. As she learns about the complicated but not-so-subtle social dynamics and cliques of the school, she struggles to find a group she fits in. Cady debates between joining the mathletes (later coined "social suicide"), the stoners, the weirdly horny band geeks and the varsity jocks. She ends up getting adopted by two "outsiders" — Janis Sarkisian (Quinna McCarty '28) and Damian Hubbard (Liam Salerno '27). This is all depicted in the lively number "Where Do You Belong" where the entire ensemble is dressed up as each prototype.

"There's a lot of moving pieces, everyone's playing a different character in the ensemble but it's really cool to look at, and it's hard, we've been working on that number for the entire semester. But every time I watch it it's so much fun and there's so much going on, on purpose," Curtis-Cherry said.

William French '29 and Ava Hill-Edgar '29, members of the ensemble, played the stoners.

"It's a lot of fun doing character work, developing your character and putting your costume together," said French. These characters wore boxers, baggy jeans, white tank tops, sunglasses and backwards baseball hats. "We have little bags of oregano for weed," Hill-Edgar said.

The characters added a strong comedic element to the show, and this scene was a lot of fun to watch. It was hilarious, but also carried some sad undertones about the strong divisions and stereotypes among high schoolers.

After befriending the two outsiders, Janis, who is an alternative and "not-like-other-girls" artist, and Damian, who is "too gay to function" (according to Janis), Cady soon discovers The Plastics. These are the mean girls of the school that everyone looks up to and is afraid of. Regina George (Campbell Keller '26) is the queen bee, Gretchen Wieners (Julia Gaudet '28) is her second-in-command, who always keeps her secrets and is desperate for approval, and Karen Smith (Gabriela Rosen '26) is the "hot and dumb" one. Janis, who harbours especially strong malice towards Regina after a falling-out they had in 8th grade, convinces Cady to infiltrate The Plastics and sabotage them from the inside.

"One of my favorite moments is the iconic scene from the movie where they're doing their sexy talent show dance, 'rocking around the pole,' and Regina's skirt falls off. It's one of the moments in the show where Regina's gained weight because she's been tricked into eating these high-calorie bars by Cady. So we had to figure out a way to give Campbell Keller a fake ass and it ended up looking so funny. And that scene is so chaotic, she's running around and so is her mom (Regan Boord '27) with big fake boobs and every time i'm like cackling in the audience. The costumes look really good, the lighting is really good and it's just one of those moments that I know people are really gonna love. Lilah Farrow is the stage manager — godsends. She is leading everything backstage and is killing it!" Curtis-Cherry said.

COURTESY PHOTO / ANDY GOBIN
The full cast and crew of "Mean Girls". The musical was performed at the Town Hall Theater this past weekend.

Drama unfolds on the stage as Cady replaces Regina, abandons her friends Janis and Damian, throws a crazy party, gets suspended from school and witnesses (or pushes... the answer is never quite made clear) Regina getting hit by a bus.

Some notable numbers from the show are "Apex Predator" which highlights the predator-like, evil nature of Regina. The number involved a lot of colorful and funky lights while the actors did chaotic dance moves resembling animals and made roaring sounds to resemble some sort of predator, like a lion.

The number "Sexy" was thrillingly fun. It stars Karen as she sings about her love and excitement for Halloween — a time when you can dress super sexy with no judgment. She opens with the hilarious lyrics:

"If I could change the world / I'd make it Halloween / Every single day / And also have world peace / Maybe world peace should be first / World peace, and then Halloween / Wait, let me start over."

"This was choreographed by Francesca Pelosi '28.5. This is her only choreographed number in the show, so she's been working on it so much, and it's a huge dance number that has been looking really good," Curtis-Cherry said.

In addition, the number had some wacky costumes, like a sexy shark, sexy corn and sexy Eleanor Roosevelt.

The show, with two acts and an intermission, had the crowd on the edge of their seats the entire time. The set design was really masterfully crafted, with scenes ranging from the high school corridors to classrooms to crazy house parties to Regina's and Cady's bedrooms. The costumes added flair to the whole show, with actors frequently changing in and out of them quickly and impressively.

Curtis-Cherry is co-president of MCMT, along with Quinn Donaldson '26.5. "Mean Girls" marks Curtis-Cherry's first directing experience for a live performance.

"Every other show I've been a part of, I've stage-managed and was always backstage, but as director, I have to be in the audience. I've had to learn to let go of a lot of things and trust and delegate my usual jobs to other people, so that's been challenging but also really liberating and fun to see things from the other side," Curtis-Cherry said.

Curtis-Cherry is a Film & Media Culture Major and has directed films before, but she is not a singer and thus relied heavily on music directors Madoyan and McCarty for this production.

"MCMT is known for its humour. Our shows are pretty humorous and we really wanted to hone in on that for this show. I love to be in charge, I love telling people what to do so it's just fun being able to corral such a big group of people coming from all different places on campus, all different backgrounds and skills and hone it into this one project. I like discovering what people are best at and helping them pinpoint that for the show. As the leader of the project, that's what I've been trying to do — bring the best side out of people," Curtis-Cherry said.

Editor's Note: Curtis-Cherry is the Communications Director for the Campus.

Various photos from MCMT's spring musical "Mean Girls."
COURTESY PHOTOS / ANDY GOBIN

TRUTH AND DOUBT IN 'BIGFOOT'

By MADDY RUSSELL & ZEPH SANTIAGO
Contributing Writers

In the middle of a distant forest, two sisters and a man in a Bigfoot costume are looking for the truth. Things quickly fall into disarray as this search for the truth takes a violent turn: the two sisters begin to doubt one another and the bigfoot impersonator is holding the sisters at gunpoint. As Matthew, the bigfoot impersonator and Alyssa's stalker (Owen Foberg '27), glances between the two sisters, he decides on a plan: whichever one of them is "right" will survive.

This isn't the first time that the sisters have disagreed with or doubted each other, but it's the first time their lives are on the line. With the stakes reaching a boiling point, Holly (Hannah Alberti '26) and Alyssa (Celia Kadoi '26) must reconcile with their differing perspectives on each other's lives and their childhoods, all while trying to escape unharmed. These themes and more are featured in "Bigfoot," a play by Meghan Endres Brown, which ran from April 16–18 at the Hepburn Zoo. The play was Hannah Alberti '26's senior thesis in acting, Alex Garcia '26's thesis in lighting design and an independent project in scenic design for Evan Berger '26.5.

Because "Bigfoot" was a senior thesis play, the students involved had significant creative input.

"From meeting with Ramyn, the director, once a week to discuss the rehearsal room to tackling Qlab for the first time as sound designer, the thesis process is all hands on in a way that the faculty shows, which only ask actors to fulfill a singular position without much deeper collaboration, are not," Alberti wrote in an email to The Campus.

Quantum Physicist Holly arrives at her sister's remote shack to fulfill her mother's dying wish: bring her estranged sister Alyssa home. The mission is hardly straightforward: on top of being a viral influencer, Alyssa has become a devout believer in Bigfoot, convinced that this is the night he will finally appear. Huddled in the cabin, she refuses to leave until she sees the creature, much to her sister's frustration. Bigfoot finally appears, but he is an impersonator — one of Alyssa's obsessive followers. Enraged by Alyssa's rejection of his advances and Holly's disbelief in Bigfoot's existence, he pulls out a gun. He demands that the two sisters recount their upbringing to determine which one deserves to live.

Part of the play's major conflict is the vast differences between the two sisters, despite being raised under the same roof. Holly, the eldest sister, was adopted and feels an innate desire to connect to her biological family, while also craving recognition from Ivy League institutions. Alyssa, who is biologically related to their mother, always felt that Holly was the "golden child" because she was "hand-picked" by their mother and had created a picture-perfect life for herself. The sisters argue at length about their relationship to their mother and bicker over which one of them was truly closer to her. All of these arguments come to a brief halt when it is revealed that Holly's life is not as perfect as it seems: she has been having an affair with a coworker, has lost her job as a professor, and is getting a divorce.

COURTESY PHOTO/HANNAH ALBERTI

Photo from the play "Bigfoot," performed in the Hepburn Zoo Black Box Theater, with Celia Kadoi '26, and Hannah Alberti '26

Alyssa admits that she misses her big sister and their mother more than she let on.

"Holly is complicated. She has set up her life to be by the book, exactly the normal life that everyone wants, and is struggling to hold it together as everything falls apart. She thinks her sister is immature, but also expects her to fall in line when their mother needs help. Ultimately, she is desperate for a connection with her family, especially given her background surrounding her birth parents," Alberti wrote.

"Bigfoot" is just the latest in a series of works by Meghan Endres Brown that focus on tumultuous family relationships, the harmful effects of social media, and the development of belief systems and skepticism.

Ultimately, the play sheds light on the fractured state of information, belief, relationships and institutions. How do we decide whose opinions we value and trust? How can we prove something is real beyond belief?

"The plot has a focus on the social media bubbles we operate in and the effects that people with powerful voices have on audiences. That is so prevalent in today's world of parasocial relationships and influencer propaganda. I hope that, with shows telling stories like these, there's a deeper connection to real people and conversations, and that light is shed on the frightening truth of media like Alyssa's," Alberti wrote.

At its core, "Bigfoot" is grounded by the relationship between the two sisters, a connection that becomes clear in the chemistry between Kadoi and Alberti onstage. Radically different, the sisters also understand each other like no one else, a connection that none of them can ever leave behind. For Alberti, this connection was the heart of the story and key to her performance.

"The sisters are such different people, but in the end, it's being honest and vulnerable that allows them to navigate an incredibly frightening situation," Alberti wrote.

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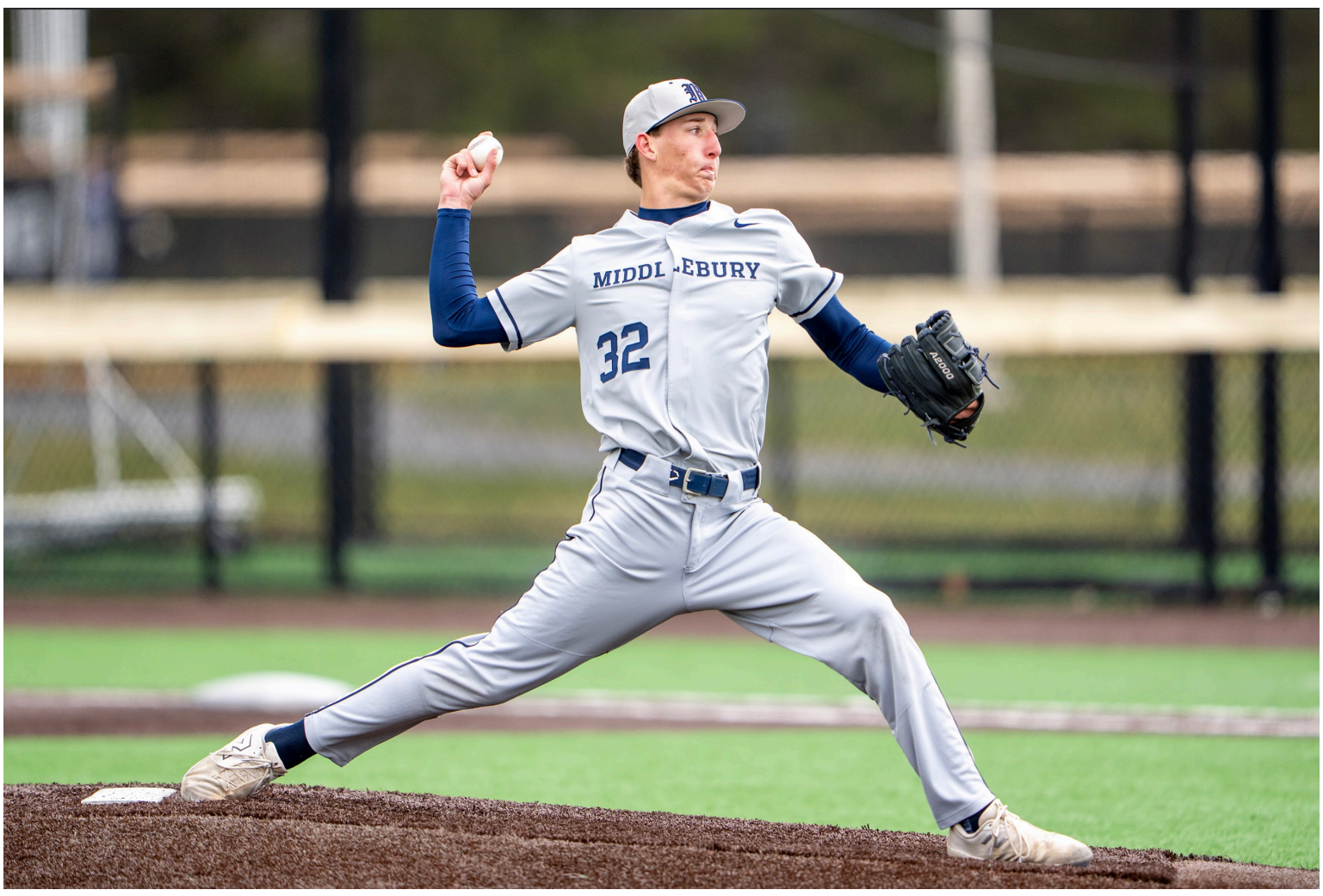
MIDDLEBURY BASEBALL EYES PLAYOFFS WITH SWEEP OF WESLEYAN

By THEO MANIATIS
Sports Editor



COURTESY PHOTO / STOCKTON PHOTO

Chase Zidlicky '29 struck out eight Wesleyan players across seven innings.

Middlebury men's baseball struggled the past two weeks, losing series to both Amherst and Hamilton. Playoff hopes hung in the balance, and something had to be done. On the second floor of Proctor Dining Hall, the team's small cohort of juniors and seniors met to inspire an end to the skid. Then this weekend, something clicked: The Panthers swept Wesleyan in a three-game series, all but guaranteeing themselves a spot in the playoffs.

"We were putting a little too much pressure on ourselves at the plate and on the mound," head coach Mike Leonard explained about the last few series. "Little mistakes were snowballing. Guys just had to kind of get back to trusting all the work that they had done"

The first game started slowly for the Panthers, who were probably still coming to terms with spending a Friday night in dreary Middletown, CT. So, the Wesleyan ballplayers had the initial advantage.

In the top of the second, Middlebury pitcher Emmet George '27 found himself in early trouble. Thanks to a passed ball and a wild pitch, Wesleyan plated five runs. George settled in during the third and fourth innings, but gave up one run in the fifth. Then, the Middlebury bats came alive.

An errant throw by the Wesleyan pitcher at the top of the sixth allowed Brayden Mathews '26 to reach first. Back-to-back doubles cut the deficit to 6-3 and knocked Wesleyan's starting pitcher out of the game. Henry Ayers '29 (slashing .462/.504/.679 on the season) followed it up with another double to make it 6-4, before a single by Joe Basso '27 capped off the rally– the Panthers only trailing by one.

Wesleyan's sloppy fielding punished them again in the seventh. Anthony Pellagrini '27 started the inning with an eight-pitch walk, followed by Brayden Mathews '26 reaching on an error by the Wesleyan shortstop. The next at bat, another throwing error from the pitcher brought Pellagrini home to score. Tie ballgame.

Over the course of the weekend, Wesleyan committed 10 errors across three games. Even little league players know that bad defense is the death of a baseball team —and that good defense makes up the best teams. In the MLB, the World Series winners consistently rank among the league's top third in fielding percentage. Last year's champions, the Los Angeles Dodgers, committed 61 errors – the fewest in the majors.

For the Panthers, Wesleyan's miscues were the spark they were looking for. Yet another throwing error let Ayers reach first base in the top of the eighth. After two quick outs, Pellagrini roped a double down the left field line to give Middlebury the 7-6 lead. Thanks to four one-hit innings by Skylar Platt '27 and Christian Zebrowski '28, a stalwart for the Panthers out of the bullpen this season, Middlebury held on for the comeback win. On to Saturday's doubleheader.

Chase Zidlicky '29 dominated the first game, tossing a seven-inning complete game shutout, scattering two hits with eight strikeouts. The Panthers' bats backed him up, putting four runs on the board after 2 innings. By the top of the seventh, it was 8-0 Panthers.

"I felt like my command was all there for all my pitches." Zidlicky reflected.

Zidlicky was tossing a perfect game until a controversial call in the fifth inning. After retiring the first hitter, Zidlicky's 3–2 pitch on the Wesleyan catcher seemed to catch the plate, but the umpire called it a ball. The Middlebury bench erupted in protest to the call, but the perfect game would have been broken up with a double from the next batter, regardless.

Zidlicky pitched confidently into the bottom of the seventh, which started with a Wesleyan single. Zidlicky responded quickly with two strikeouts, and on his 86th pitch, he forced a groundout to cap off his best start in navy and white.

"I had to go out there and compete, and just do it for the team," Zidlicky said about his performance.

Leonard had high praise for the freshman: "He did an outstanding job of throwing multiple pictures for strikes, and you know he's capable of that almost every time."

In the second game, Wesleyan's defensive struggles continued to haunt them. In the first inning, a muffed throw from the pitcher allowed Ayers to reach and then later score off a groundout from Sam Gersch '29. In the third, Ayers doubled and scored on Basso's double. Basso then scored on a throwing error from the first baseman to make it 3-0 Panthers.

The contest was closer than the 7-3 score. Wesleyan racked up a total of 13 hits — most of them being singles — against the four Middlebury pitchers. Alex Faust '29 started the game with three scoreless innings before Stefano Yozzo '27 tossed four innings of two-run ball (only one earned). Dylan Knightly '26 entered for the eighth inning, where he tied the record for pitching appearances with the Panthers at 53. The unflappable Zebrowski shut the door in the ninth on zero days' rest.

The three wins bring Middlebury's record to 17–10, and they seem to be hitting their stride heading into the final stretch of the season. This weekend, they'll play at home against Williams College, who have only nine wins all season. Afterwards, the Panthers will have their eyes set on the NESCAC playoffs.

"We want to be a championship caliber team, and that comes with some pressure," Leonard said. "It's about trying to reframe that as a privilege."

ON THE MOVE: MEG SIMON '26 RECEIVES HOCKEY HUMANITARIAN AWARD

By SIMON SCHMIEDER
Senior Sports Editor

With her dad playing professional hockey, Meg Simon '26 moved over 50 times growing up. Between trade deals and being called up to the NHL, Simon's mom made sure the family always followed along. "It was really important to my mom that we moved as a unit," Simon explained— a luxury that many hockey families forego.

Simon lived in four countries before reaching high school: Germany, England, Canada and the United States. Simon was only four days old when she attended her first NHL game — now, after four years at Middlebury, she has received the highest praise in college hockey for her service to the community.

Simon received the Hockey Humanitarian Award on Friday, Apr. 10, in an awards ceremony that took place during the NCAA's Men's Frozen Four weekend in Las Vegas. The other awards featured were the most sportsmanlike (Derek Hines Unsung Hero Award), best goalie (Mike Richter Award), and the best overall player (Hobey Baker Memorial Award).

The Hockey Humanitarian Award spans all three divisions of both men's and women's college hockey and is given to an athlete who makes substantial contributions to both their team and their community through volunteerism. It is reserved for "college hockey's finest citizen."

COURTESY PHOTO / MEG SIMON

Meg Simon '26 delivers her speech at the NCAA men's hockey Frozen Four weekend.

In addition to the women's hockey squad, Simon is a member of Middlebury's women's golf team, which won their first NESCAC title in the spring of last year. With the hockey team, she's reached two consecutive NCAA semifinal appearances under legendary head coach Bill Mandigo.

Yet for Simon, being on a team is more than a sporting opportunity—it is a chance to work together for the community around which the team exists. "Growing up around a locker room, I learned that being part of a team was of the utmost importance," Simon said. "I'm a big believer that teams are the most powerful entity in the world."

Simon has often leveraged her memberships in Middlebury teams to engage with the college and community. In addition to serving as the Co-Chair of Volunteering for the women's ice hockey team and as a member of Middlebury's Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC), Simon has served as a RADical Health Mentor and President of Middlebury College Access Mentors (MiddCAM), working with high schoolers as they navigate Middlebury admissions.

Beyond the college campus, Simon has worked with the Middlebury Amateur Hockey Association (MAHA), Special Olympics Vermont, and the Yellow House Community. Among other events, Simon also organized a free athletic clinic for the community on National Girls and Women in Sports Day this January.

Simon's upbringing has been central to her drive to always help her community. At home, her parents instilled the value of service. "I was raised by two people who really believe in the importance of giving back," Simon reflected. Constantly moving also forced Simon to be flexible and make new friends on the fly, even in a German kindergarten—no small feat for a five-year-old with no German-language skills. Having to move all the time was ultimately "a blessing in disguise" for Simon.

"I had no choice but to be adaptable and social, just moving so many times. I was the new girl in the classroom so many times that I had to figure out how to connect with someone almost instantly. I never knew when I was going to leave that school."

At Middlebury, Simon has benefited from working with coach Bill Mandigo in both the hockey and golf programs. Like few other Middlebury athletes, she has seen both sides of his coaching. "College sports have been a true testament of character for me. From Coach Bill, I've learned that nothing's given to you, everything is earned," Simon said. "I was able to see a more holistic perspective of him."

Her overall perspective of people has also grown. "It's a very different speed of sport obviously, but also speed of people who play golf and hockey," Simon said as she reflected on playing both sports. This insight has been instrumental as she has engaged with the world outside these programs, including college and community.

As the winner of the award, the Hockey Humanitarian Award Foundation made a contribution to a charity of Simon's choice. At the Las Vegas ceremony, a $3,000 donation was given to Special Olympics Vermont – Addison County.

WOMEN'S LACROSSE TEAM EXTENDS UNBEATEN STREAK AGAINST HAMILTON

By THIE HARTHONO
Sports Editor

The Middlebury women's lacrosse team breezed by Hamilton at home on Wednesday April 15. The dominant 17-3 win is proof of the Panthers' top form as they enter the final stretch of the regular season, with just two remaining matchups before the NESCAC tournament.

The Panthers got off to a slow start against their opponents on a muggy Wednesday afternoon at Peter Kohn Field. They conceded the opener in the third minute as a Hamilton attacker darted into the crease, firing the ball into the top left corner. Parker Hanson '29 converted a free-position opportunity, passing to Maeve Lee '28, who tucked it away to equalize. Middlebury would concede again, before Caroline Adams '26 and Haley Hamilton '26 capitalized on a Hamilton yellow card, putting the Panthers back in front while holding the numerical advantage.

The teams looked evenly matched through the first period, and Middlebury's offense failed to convert three big chances in the opening minutes. The Hamilton bench roared as they took early leads over the nationally top-ranked team, but the Panthers were unfazed.

"We started a little slow today, and I think it was a good experience to have to find our rhythm when it wasn't coming naturally," head coach Kate Livesay '03 said of the slow start. "I felt like that composure and poise, and that execution — in those moments when things weren't going perfectly — was really nice."

The second quarter saw the Panthers break away. The defense shut down threats before they could advance up the field, and the offense wore down the opponent, stringing together dizzying passes around the opponents' fan.

COURTESY PHOTO / ANNICA NASSIRY

Scoring after just 42 seconds into the second half, Parker Hanson '29 registered two goals and two assists against Hamilton.

Three minutes in, Sophia Lee '28 opened her big offensive day with a courageous dash to the cage, dodging right and firing across the goal. She scored again a minute later from a free position. Adams added to her tally with two minutes remaining, and Libby Schiffman '29 joined the party with less than ten seconds to play in the half. Haley Hamilton won the draw control and sprinted back into the attack, swinging the ball to Skylar Lach '26, who put it away for an 8-2 lead heading into the half.

The clouds broke cover before the start of the third, and what looked like a close contest in the first had cracked wide open. The Panthers ran up the score, finding the back of the net less than a minute into the half. Hanson cut towards the cage, caught the ball, and fired home for a 9-2 lead. Hamilton scored their third and final goal of the day a minute later.

Middlebury would need some time to respond. Off the draw control, a chance instantly opened up for Lach, but her bouncing shot up the middle was deflected away. Another chance, minutes later, was turned away.

With eight minutes to play in the period, Middlebury uncorked a scoring run. Maeve Lee scored again, then Lucy Bishop '27 won the draw control. The Panthers worked the clock, moving the ball around the field. If no chance materialized, they recycled it. With under six to go in the period, Larch recovered a ground ball and swung it to Sophia Lee, who passed it to a darting Hanson for a cracking high-to-low shot.

A minute later, Sophia Lee scooped up a high pass over the net and fired from the right flank to make it 12-3. A solo goal from Maeve Lee and a free position score by Sophia Lee gave the Panthers a 14-3 lead at the end of the third. First year Goalie Annie Spring '29 came on to start the fourth. Goals from Britt Nawrocki '26, Sofia Collins '29 and Sophia Lee closed out the victory.

Nine different players scored for the Panthers on Wednesday. Sophia Lee scored a career-high five goals, and Bishop tallied her 200th successful career draw control. The win was Middlebury's tenth this season by a margin of 10 points or greater.

"We really believe that in whichever combination of seven that steps onto the field to play attack, every one of us is a threat," Adams said. "I think that mentality and trust in each other is what empowers anyone on a given day to make special plays — I could list all of the scorers, but the point is that this team is full of threats and we all have so much belief and faith in each other."

The win will add to the Panthers' preparation and growing confidence as they approach the postseason. "This time of year is about trying to elevate our game," Livesay said. "At the beginning of the season, you're testing things, you're seeing what works, what doesn't, who do we need to give opportunities to. Right now, it's about making sure we have depth where we need it."

"There is so much to be excited for heading into the postseason," Adams said when asked about the team's current form and confidence. "We have worked so hard with this group of girls since September, and we just have so much fun together that we want it to last for as long as possible."